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Item 5 of the provisional agenda**

A COMPARATIVE STUDY AND ANALYSIS OF ONGOING FOOD SECURITY PROGRAMMES IN AFRICA

Executive Summary

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While the notion of food security is probably as old as man himself, in modern times international attention has been drawn to it only since the World Food Conference which was convened in 1975 by the United Nations. The Conference called, not only for a drastic reduction of fluctuations in food availability in areas of the world subject to food insecurity but also for the five main international initiatives:

(i) The establishment of the World Food Council;
(ii) The creation of the International Fund for Agricultural Development;
(iii) A Consultative Group on Food Production and Investment in the Developing countries sponsored jointly by the World Bank, FAO and the United Nations Development Programme;
(iv) An improved policy for food-aid;
(v) An international Undertaking on World Food Security, with the establishment within FAO of a Committee on World Food Security, and a Global Information and Early Warning System.

In the African context, because of the chronic famine, hunger and malnutrition coupled with a growing dependence on food imports and food-aid, food security was given the right consideration and motivated the African Ministers of Agriculture in adopting in 1978 the African Regional Food Plan (AFPLAN) and the African Heads of State and Government in adopting in 1980 the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) and in 1985 the Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990 (APPER) which was endorsed in 1986 by the 13th Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The concept of food security itself evolved over the years. Early attempts between 1974 and 1983 in implementing food security programmes in Africa were based on the constitution of small emergency stocks of food grains and the creation of an international grain reserve for use in meeting emergency food-aid requirements. If the stocking policies and the flow of emergency food-aid have helped to remove temporary food insecurity, it is noteworthy that such attempts have concentrated on cereals and predominantly wheat and rice. These foodstuffs were not widely produced in most of the countries and their portion of the diet in some countries is very low. The narrower concept of food security aimed at eliminating temporary food deficits only was far from the objective of the self-sufficiency in food production and supply required by the Lagos Plan of Action. From 1983 onwards, the concept of world food security was broadened so as to ensure that all people at all times have both physical and economic access to the basic food they need. This new concept included the following two assumptions:

(i) a distinction must be made between permanent and temporary food insecurity;

(ii) famine, hunger and malnutrition are in most cases, as much a problem of poverty as of shortage of food supplies. Also, the focus of food security programmes included the improvement of infrastructure, better grain stock management, strenghthening of inland transport and marketing facilities and food information systems and also giving more consideration to the issue of income distribution.

In the African context, it became clear that account must be taken of cereals as well as non cereal basic foodstuffs such as roots and tubers, pulses and plantains in assessing food insecurity and in conceiving food security programmes.

Food security programmes in Africa included national and sub-regional food strategies. A review of current food security programmes at national level reveals that they may all be grouped under the following five headings, although in some cases they may cover activities under several of these headings:

(i) Programmes aimed at the improvement of food supplies in emergencies;
(ii) Measures to improve internal marketing and distribution networks and their functioning;
(iii) Measures to increase national preparedness;
(iv) Reduction of pre- and post-harvest food losses;
(v) Advisory services for assistance to, and improvement in food security planning and programming.

At the subregional level, food strategies have been formulated by the main economic groupings.

If the majority of African countries have some form of food security programme as part of their development strategy, it appeared that national resources devoted to the improvement of food security by member States have been less than adequate. Also, the implementation of schemes and proposals within the subregional economic groupings has been particularly slow or, in some cases nil.
Fortunately, the efforts of most African countries have been significantly complemented by a large number of international aid agencies, through both multi-lateral and bi-lateral funding.
Prominent among international agencies active in the field of food security is the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) which, through its Food Security Assistance Scheme (FSAS), has been a catalyst in the implmentation of 40 national and 5 subregional food security programmes in Africa. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa is also active in this field, especially at the subregional level. Other multi-lateral sources of funding for food security programmes in Africa are the World Bank (IBRD and IDA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), OPEC countries multi-lateral agencies and many Regional Development Banks.

the other hand, there have been many bi-laterally assisted food curity programmes and projects in African countries. Noteworthy ntributors to the improvement of food security in this way are the ropean Community, the United States of America, the Federal Republic Germany, the four Nordic European Countries, the United Kingdom, nada and Australia.

It is now easy to assess the efforts towards food security which ve been made up to now. However, an overall assessment of what have en achieved could be based on actions taken to cope with the three in sources of food insecurity including short-term instability of od production, a structural deficit in food production and despread poverty, rural and urban.
e first mentioned source of food insecurity is so largely a result natural phenomena that despite the efforts made in bringing more of e factors of production under the producer's control and in proving the preparedness by Governments, the possibility of iminating all short-term instability has been limited.
th regard to the second source of food insecurity, although the etary energy supplies (DES) for the continent rose from an average 2170 kilocalories per day in 1961-63 to 2260 kcals per day in 79-81, the "food gap" in many African countries, resulting from ructural deficits, has continued to grow in absolute terms.
nsidering the third source of food insecurity which is the despread poverty resulting in lack of "food entitlement", it is ear that African countries need to give more consideration to the oblem of access to food supply for low income rural and urban groups thin individual countries. Besides the low impact of on-going ogrammes in controlling these sources of food insecurity, there is so some evidence that interventions have not always been well -ordinated.

Looking back over the last 12 years, one can see that "food" has en firmly placed on the agenda in many discussions of African velopment and scarcely any national development plan did not accord od self-sufficiency and food security a high, on the highest iority. However, it is rather unfortunate to note that during the riod from 1969/71 to 1982/84, the overall cereal deficit for Africa d grown from 5.2 million tonnes to 24.8 million tonnes and that rica's share of all cereal aid to developing countries represented .7 per cent in 1973/74 and had risen to 56.7 per cent by 1981/82 and ached 61.5 per cent in 1984/85. Unless this trend is arrested, the ficit in the year 2010 would 100 million tonnes.
view of these considerations, it is recommended that:

(i) each member State undertake a detailed examination of its past food policy and efforts in search of food security;

(ii) those member States which have not yet done so, formulate a national food strategy or plan as well as a national preparedness plan;

(iii) the international community augment its assistance to African countries to enable them to achieve their goal of food security in the short, medium and long terms and to fully

contribute in the implementation of the recommendations of the World Food Conference and of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 concerning food security;

(iv) the international community and food surplus nations provide and programme as far ahead as possible, the food-aid necessary to meet African countries' food deficit requirements in the years to come;

(v) the international agencies better coordinate their activities in the field of food security in Africa and increase their exchange of information on all aspects of the African food situation and outlook.